The Necessity

of the

Royal Arch

to the

Master Mason

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This Little Book is Fraternally

Dedicated to

The Master Mason who is Seeking

MORE LIGHT

—by—

The Author

The Necessity of the Royal Arch Degree to the Master Mason

The system of Masonic degrees, as now practiced, is the product of an evolution. Prior to 1717 there is no record that Freemasonry consisted of more than one degree. The symbolism, the beautiful lecture, the ornate diction, with which we find it clothed today, represents the growth and development from the crude and transition stage of past centuries. Strictly speaking, there was no degree from the dawn of Freemasonry until it began to take on the speculative feature. Before the speculative era, the initiate or apprentice was sworn on "the buke" to observe certain charges, now known as the "Ancient Charges and Regulations." This constituted the entire ceremony, with perhaps the recital of the various legends of the Craft, portions of which are retained to this day.

The Mason, prior to the "Revival" of 1717, was designated as an Apprentice, Fellowcraft or Master, not because of any special ceremony or degree work, but on account of the length of time of service and skill manifested in his handicraft. The Ancient Charges and Regulations, as

read to the apprentices, referred to the duties they owed to each other, to the lodge and the Holy Church. It is even doubted by some of our best Masonic historians that a grip and pass word were connected with these ancient ceremonies.

Ancient Craft Masonry, from its earliest legendary history (625 A. D.) down to 1740, made no pretensions to philosophical speculations. No latter-day wise men existed to convert the simple tools of the operative craftsman into a philosophical fog bank. Near the middle of the eighteenth century other than mere operatives were admitted into the guilds or lodges, and men were elected to preside over the brethren who were not skilled in the implements of the Craft. The introduction of the speculative Mason prepared the way for the dawn of Freemasonry. The so-called "Revival" of 1717 was but the bursting forth of the evolutionary forces that had been slowly developing for half a century. These same forces are at work today, so that it can be truly said that Freemasonry is a progressive science. Masonic historians are agreed that some time between 1723 and 1730 the Second

and Third degrees were evolved, and in this evolution of degrees, ritualism and symbolism were developed, resulting in intellectual and philosophical Freemasonry of today.

The central idea of the entire system of Freemasonry became the "loss" and the "recovery" of the "Word," symbolizing death and the resurrection, the ending of the present and the beginning of the future life. The student of Freemasonry must admit that "The Word" is the central point around which the entire system of Masonic symbolism must revolve. "Its possession is the consummation of all Masonic knowledge; when lost its recovery is the soul's object of symbolic labor." Mackey says: "No event in the history of Speculative Freemasonry had so important an influence upon its development as a system of symbolism as the invention of the Royal Arch Degree and its introduction into the Masonic Ritual."

The Royal Arch stands as the rainbow of promise in the Ritual; it stands as the promise of the resurrection; of that which was lost and that which shall be recovered.

The question arises as to whether

the **Master's Word** was originally communicated in the Third Degree. On this point there is some diversity of opinion. In our present Ritual of the Third Degree the **Master's Word** is lost. Dr. Oliver, a noted Masonic historian, says: "The **True Word** was never lost but transferred to the Royal Arch," and in corroboration of this statement further says: "I have before me an old French engraving of the Ground Work of the Master's Lodge, dated in 1740, containing the usual emblems, and on the coffin is the 'True Word' in Roman capitals."

Brother Newton R. Parvin, Grand Secretary and Librarian of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, in a letter to the writer, says: "We have in the library an old ritual manuscript of 1740, which was stated to be used by the brethren of Ben Johnson, Head Lodge, No. 194. The original manuscript belonged to George Oliver, and it includes in the Third Degree the Master's Word. This makes about sixty pages of closely written matter. It begins with a long historical introduction. Many points are quite similar to our present methods. The language is very simple and impressive." This would tend to prove that

before the legend of Hiram Abif was introduced into the Master's Degree the **True Word** was communicated in the Master's Degree and not a **substitute Word.** It necessarily followed that when the legend of Hiram became a part of the Ritual of this degree the "loss" of the "Word" followed, as the "loss" is a part of the Hiramic legend. But the "loss" without a "recovery" would be an absurdity; to complete the symbolism of Freemasonry, the "Word" must be recovered, hence the necessity for a Fourth Degree, the Royal Arch.

In 1738, or earlier, the story of the loss of the Word and the new legend, the Royal Arch, were gradually introduced into the lodges, and when the division occurred (1751), dividing the Freemasonry of England into the "Moderns" and "Ancients," the latter organized a Grand Lodge and adopted a Ritual of Four Degrees, the fourth being the Royal Arch.

The Grand Lodge of "Moderns" evidently continued to use the old Ritual, without the legend of Hiram Abif, while the Grand Lodge of "Ancients" used the new Ritual containing the Hiramic legend and the Fourth Degree, until the year 1813,

when the two Grand Lodges united and formed the present Grand Lodge of England, known as the United Grand Lodge of England. It is therefore to the Grand Lodge of Ancients that we owe the Master's degree as found in our Ritual and also the preservation of the Royal Arch Degree. One of the Articles of union of the two Grand Lodges of England in 1813 was the retention of the degrees as formulated by the Grand Lodge of "Ancients;" hence, among the articles of agreement of this union, we find the only declaration made anywhere or at any time as to what constitutes "Ancient Craft Masonry." This article declares that **"Ancient Craft Masonry shall consist of the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason, together with the Holy Royal Arch."**

We see, therefore, that the Royal Arch is merely the evolution of a truth contained in the early Third Degree. It is not a "Higher Degree," but the last volume of the series in a sublime story revealed through symbolism. The Master's Degree without the Royal Arch is a story half told, a song half sung and a promise unfulfilled. The candidate is

promised that he should receive, but is put off with a "Substitute." He is left in darkness, in doubt, and to the thoughtful one in a condition of disappointment. Yet, there is a purpose behind this seeming deception. Light and revealed Truth comes only through toil and willing service. This Lesson must be learned before any Mason is qualified to know and appreciate the Truth, **The Master's Word.** It is, possibly, unfortunate that the Royal Arch Degree was separated from the "Blue Degrees;" but whether fortunate or unfortunate, the Royal Arch stands as the last of the degrees in Ancient Craft Masonry. It is the Summit and no Master Mason is in possession of all that Freemasonry teaches without the Royal Arch. The series of four degrees continued to be conferred under a lodge charter until about 1750, in America at least. The earliest history that we have of the Royal Arch in this country was in 1753, when it was conferred under a lodge charter in Fredericksburg, Va. It was introduced into New York about the same time by an English military lodge, and in Massachusetts in 1769, where it was conferred in St. Andrew's Lodge.

Since that time the Royal Arch Degree has remained secure in its superior place. The term Royal Arch Lodge was succeeded by Chapter and Royal Arch Chapter. The word Chapter was used in Connecticut as early as September 5, 1783; in Pennsylvania, September 5, 1789; in New York, April 29, 1791; in Massachusetts, December 19, 1794. The word Chapter took the place of Lodge in England, for the first time, April 29, 1768. The word Companion, used in the Chapter in place of Brother, was first used in England in 1778. These terms, Chapter and Companion, were soon carried to America, where they flourish as elements in Capitular system of degrees.

Such, in brief, is the history of the Royal Arch Degree; its parentage is as legitimate as any of the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry; it sprang from the introduction of Speculative Freemasonry into Operative Masonry,—the fruit of symbolism and allegory. To be a Master Mason is the highest and most honorable degree that any man can attain; it entitles him to all the rights and privileges of the Craft; all the accumulated so-called higher degrees do not add any-

thing to his Masonic stature. The Royal Arch is a part of the Master's Degree—the summit of its excellency. It is the privilege and should be the duty of Master Masons to complete the Masonic story, told in allegory and revealed in symbolism, by receiving the Royal Arch.

Would you be enrolled as one living in that future generation that shall discover **IT?** Act now.

THE MARK MASTER DEGREE

The degrees of the Chapter are: Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch. The origin of the Mark Degree is veiled in obscurity, like all Masonic degrees, but, like the others, it sprang into existence in the earlier period of speculative Freemasonry.

It was customary for the operative Masons to select for themselves a Mark, to be placed upon every piece of work wrought by them. This was done in order to keep a check on each operative's work by the Overseers, and to facilitate the payment of wages. Each Mark was distinctive and the same Mark frequently descended from father to son through several generations.

These marks may be seen today on the stones in the old cathedrals of Europe. Fac-simile copies are reproduced in all Masonic histories. In Scotland, the operative Mason was required to register his Mark by the Shaw's Statutes issued in 1598. From this requirement of registration of the Mark, the Mark Degree was evidently evolved.

The earliest record of the Mark Degree being conferred in Scotland bears the date of January 7, 1778. Yet this does not prove that the degree was not conferred at a much earlier date. These records also contain the information that the Mark Degree could not be conferred upon anyone not having received the degree of Fellowcraft and Master. A report made to the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England states: "There is probably no degrees in Freemasonry that can lay claim to a greater antiquity than those of Mark Man or Mark Mason and Mark Master Mason."

The degree was conferred in Nova Scotia in 1784; in Connecticut in 1791; in New York in 1791, and in Boston in 1793. Like the Royal Arch, the Mark Degree was originally conferred

in the Lodge. In the United States, the General Grand Chapter, R. A. M., issued Mark Lodge charters up to 1853, when it was prohibited and the degree passed under Chapter control. In England the degree is under the control of the Grand Lodge of Mark Masons; in Canada and in Scotland the control is vested as in the United States.

The lessons of the degree are intensely practical, emphasizing the great requirement in life, viz.: Qualification and service.

THE DEGREE OF PAST MASTER

The general use of the term Past Master by the Craft, means one who has been elected, installed and served for twelve months over a regular lodge. The general use of the term does not imply a separate degree, although in many Grand Lodges the honorary grade of Past Master is conferred upon Masters elect as a part of the ceremony of installation. This grade or degree was or is conferred only in the presence of Past Masters. The degree is the second in the series of the Chapter; hence arose the terms Actual Past Master and Virtual Past Master, the latter

meaning one who had received the degree in a Chapter but who had not been elected or served as Master over a lodge. A Virtual Past Master is not entitled to recognition by the Grand Lodge as a Past Master.

The degree is an old one. We find the expression of Past Master used in 1774 and implied one as "having passed the Chair through some ceremony." The Constitution of the Grand Lodge of England, 1723, speaks of the installed Master passing through certain "significant ceremonies." There can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the degree. It dates from the birth of speculative Freemasonry. The introduction of the degree into Capitular Masonry rests on the fact that, originally, the Royal Arch was conferred only on those who had been elected and presided over a lodge as Master, but it was manifestly unjust to a large portion of the brethren to have such a restriction placed upon them and the Royal Arch. The following law of 1789 illustrates this fact: "No brother can be exalted until he has been at least three years a Master Mason and has presided six months as Master of some regular warranted lodge

or has passed the Chair by Dispensation." This law shows the old restriction and the modification that was assuming shape, permitting others than actual Past Masters to receive the Royal Arch. An old law found in Harmony Lodge, No. 52, Philadelphia, in 1799, states: "That every brother who has not passed the Chair shall pay fourteen dollars, out of which the Dispensation shall be paid for; if he has passed the Chair, for being exalted, eight dollars."

That is, an actual Past Master could receive the Royal Arch Degree for eight dollars, but one who has not received the Past Master's Degree must obtain a Dispensation from the Grand Master to receive it before he could be made a Royal Arch Mason, and it cost fourteen dollars.

When the Royal Arch Degree passed from under the control of the Lodge and became a separate system, known as the Chapter, the prerequisite to the Royal Arch remained, viz.: The Past Master's Degree. The Virtual Past Master Degree became a part of the Chapter series. The reason for this prerequisite becomes apparent when the lessons of this much abused, but beautiful, degree

are studied and understood. The lesson of obedience to authority is proof against anarchy, and he who would teach must first learn to obey.

MOST EXCELLENT MASTER DEGREE

A lie well told and repeated constantly becomes a truth to credulous people. This applies to the oft-repeated statement that Thomas Smith Webb fabricated the American system of Capitular Degrees, and the Orders of the Commandery of Knights Templar. But, upon investigation, we will find that some of the degrees of the Chapter and the Orders of the Commandery were in existence and conferred before Webb was born. The Most Excellent is frequently credited to his fertile brain, and so stated by some Masonic writers, but fortunately there is on record in Massachusetts and New York the date of Webb's birth and the dates on which he received all the Masonic degrees. The dates go to show that the Most Excellent was known and conferred before Webb became a Royal Arch Mason.

The latter half of the eighteenth century was prolific in Masonic degrees in France and England. The

degrees of all the rites can date their birth from 1723 to 1760, and in the maze of names and titles of degrees we find a veritable jungle. In this period we find the Irish System embraced The Chair, The Excellent, The Super Excellent, The Royal Arch, The Knight Templar and the Prince Rose Croix. The Scottish System embraced The Mark Master, The Past Master, The Excellent Master and The Royal Arch. St. Andrew's Chapter, Boston, worked the Irish System, except The Chair, from 1769 to 1797. After 1799 the Mark, Past, Most Excellent and Royal Arch were conferred. A prominent Masonic writer says of the change: "This transition indicates and suggests that the Super Excellent Degree of one hundred and twenty years ago contained the marrow and something of the bone of the Most Excellent Degree."

From 1791 the Most Excellent was a well known degree and a part of the Capitular system. The Super Excellent of this period must not be taken for the Super Excellent appendant to the Council of Royal and Select Masters of today. The Most Excellent degree is a fitting prelude to the Royal Arch, one of the most

impressive degrees in its ceremonies and sublimely spiritual in its symbolism.

WHAT OF THE HOUR?

What of the hour in Freemasonry? Brighter, stronger, clearer. We often become discouraged and are inclined to be pessimistic; but amid all the errors and stumbling, a better day is dawning, when we shall see the beneficent labors of Freemasonry shining in effulgent splendor. Freemasonry is growing in power and beneficence. As its immortal principles take root in the fallow soil of the human heart and mind, it buds and blossoms into the foliage of kindness and the Hesperidean fruit of charity toward all mankind. While the Masonic tramp may be seen on the beautiful highway of Freemasonry, there are many more today, than ever, who are toiling in mind and heart in the treasure-strewn mines of Freemasonry's realm.

Freemasonry today means more than negative plaudits and negative principles; but she stands pre-eminently as a living, growing, resistless power, whose end and aim is the exaltation of man and the glory of "The I Am That I Am." Our ancient

brethren journeyed from Babylon to Jerusalem—out of bondage into freedom—with one strong purpose in view. What was the desire so preeminent in their hearts? What was the foundation of the zeal that actuated them to undergo the trials and hardships of that weary journey? Let them speak: "To aid in the noble and glorious work of rebuilding our City and Temple of the Lord." It was Work, Work, Work. Not idleness and ease.

But in the building of this City of the Brotherhood of Man and the spiritual Temple of ours, what portion of the work are you willing to undertake? Are you willing to quarry the rough ashlar? Are you willing to be a burden bearer? Are you willing to work in the trenches and lay the foundation stones, away down from the sight and applause of man?

Royal Arch Masonry asks us: "What portion of the work are you willing to undertake?" You may answer that, owing to my social standing I am willing to wear the helmet and plume of the Captain of the Host, or, on account of my wealth and dignity, I will wear a crown and be the King, or, being a

prince of good fellows, I will wear the mitre. But where are the claimants of the crow, the pick and the spade?

Royal Arch Masonry would answer: Any portion of the work, be it ever so humble. It is a willing service, a self-denying service; self, but a great part of the whole; self-glorified, only as a sacrifice for all. If there is one great truth that Royal Arch Masonry teaches above all others, it is that labor is honorable, be it ever so humble. That he who would wear the crown must earn it. That he who would rule, must first learn to obey. That he who would enter the sanctum sanctorum of the genius of Royal Arch Masonry must enter by self-denying toil, and the hinges of its doors will swing open as readily for the peasant as for the prince, for the subject as for the King.

But what are the emoluments for all the hardships of the journey and toil? Is it a princely salary or the honors of official distinction? Again comes the reply: "Without the hope of fee or reward." It implies a willing service without the hope of a fee or reward. It is unselfish toil. The emoluments of Royal Arch Masonry are not hire, but doing one's duty.

The spirit of selfishness is hire, the spirit of unselfishness is love.

If in charity we remove the rubbish of disappointed hopes, may we not discover the keystone of the secret vault of the mysteries of a sweeter song, and nobler aspirations? Then what is our reward?

If in love we aid a fainting brother to lay a better foundation for the Temple of his life: Then what is our reward?

If in kindness we extend the hand to a weary sojourner in his toilsome march over rough and rugged roads to the new Jerusalem: Then what is our reward?

If in good will we cheer the sorrowing, encourage the halting, and reclaim the wandering: Then what is our reward?

If in love we bear in our hands food for the hungry and a home for the homeless: Then what is our reward? Answer it in the light of your conscience and by the promptings of your better self.

Of such is the labor of Royal Arch Masonry; broad as the world, deep as God's love, co-existent with eternity, and as "beautiful as the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth peace."

NOTE—Additional copies of this leaflet may be obtained by applying to

C. C. HUNT, Chairman,
Bureau of Education
Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Price: 1000 copies $20.00;
500 copies $12.00;
100 copies $ 2.50;
25 copies 75c.

Other supplies furnished by the Educational Bureau:

"A Word to Master Masons." An eight-page leaflet by C. C. Hunt, P. G. H. P. Revised from a report presented to the Grand Chapter, R. A. M. of Iowa in 1922. Supplementary to Dr. Kuhn's pamphlet, but not dependent thereon.

Price: 1000 copies $9.50;
100 copies $1.25;
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Sample copy free on request.

Why A Royal Arch Mason: A four-page leaflet authorized by the Grand Chapter R. A. M. of New York.

Price: 1000 copies $6.00;
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FOR CHAPTER CEREMONIES

"The Royal Arch Orpheus." A Royal Arch song book for Chapter Degrees, by Dr. P. B. Eversden, M. A. Price $1.00 per copy, postpaid.

"Hand Book of Ceremonies and Forms." A Guide Book for Constituting Chapters, Dedications and Installations. Penal Code. Forms for Records. Price, $1.35, postpaid.

FOR CHAPTER PROGRAMS

In this work the Educational Bureau, to be effective, must have the co-operation of a similar bureau or committee in each Grand Chapter. It is new work and we must feel our way. As a beginning we have prepared two questionnaires with answers. Samples of each will be sent free on request.

"Questionnaire No. I." Two leaflets, one containing ten questions on Capitular Masonry; the other gives the answers. It is suggested that these questions and answers be made the basis of a program at some Chapter Convocation. Several days prior to this convocation let the questions be sent or handed to each member of the Chapter with the request that he try to find the answers to as many as possible and let it be announced that at the designated convocation the answers will be given and discussed. It may be that some Companions will have found better answers than those given on the leaflet.

Price: 1000 copies, $9.00;
100 copies, $1.00;
25 copies, 30c.

"Officers of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons." A 24 page pamphlet by C. C. Hunt, P. G. H. P., giving some information about each Chapter Officer, his title, station, robes, jewels, etc., and their meaning, symbolism, and teaching. It begins with 100 questions on the subject, all of

which are answered in the descriptive matter which follows. This pamphlet could be made the basis of several programs.

Price: 1000 copies, $20.00;
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FOR THE ROYAL ARCH MASON

"King Solomon's Temple." A 36-page, illustrated pamphlet, prepared by the General Grand Secretary, giving interesting particulars on the Temple, and comments on the Most Excellent Master's degree.

Price: 500 copies $55.00;
250 copies $30.00;
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Sample copies 10c each.

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REMEMBER!

The Educational Bureau invite any Royal Arch Masons to ask questions on Masonic subjects. We are at your service. Make use of us. Address all communications, including orders for our publications, to C. C. Hunt, Chairman, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.